

Specimen record of Short-toed Snake Eagle for Kenya is invalid

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Received 3 April 2001

The only published record of Short-toed Snake Eagle *Circaetus gallicus* for Kenya is a specimen collected near Lake Turkana (formerly called Lake Rudolf) in 1968 (Owre & Paulson 1968). The specimen was deposited in the Field Museum of Natural History (Chicago) as FMNH 369299 (Fig. 1).

WSC recently examined the specimen and determined that it was not an adult Short-toed Snake Eagle but a similar-appearing second plumage Black-breasted Snake



Figure 1. Specimen of first plumage Black-breasted Snake Eagle collected at Lake Turkana (upper) compared to an adult Short-toed Snake Eagle (lower). Note the new black breast feathers and the more prominent black banding on the new secondary and undertail of the Black-breasted Snake Eagle.

Eagle *C. pectoralis*. This plumage had not been described at the time this eagle was collected. It was not known until Newman (1983) described and illustrated it; however, he called it an alternate juvenile plumage. Maclean (1993) calls this plumage a second year plumage. Both Newman (1983) and Maclean (1993) have illustrations of perched eagles in this plumage that show how similar they are in appearance to adult Short-toed Snake Eagles.

The specimen also strongly resembled adult Short-toed Snake Eagles but differed in having some new black breast feathers and a mix of new adult secondaries with wide black subterminal bands and brownish juvenile secondaries. The secondaries of adult Short-toed Snake Eagles have a wide dusky terminal band and a narrower black subterminal band. The uppersides of the specimen appear identical to those of adult Short-toed Snake Eagles.

Clark (2000) discussed in more detail the separation of these two similar plumages and the field identification of the large *Circaetus* snake eagles. Clark (1999) discussed taxonomic problems in the genus caused by failure to recognize the second plumage of Black-breasted Snake Eagles at nests and confusing them with other species.

Acknowledgements

We thank the curators of the Field Museum of Natural History for permission to examine this specimen.

References:

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